

Kettering General Hospital celebrates 125th birthday

The hospital first opened in 1897

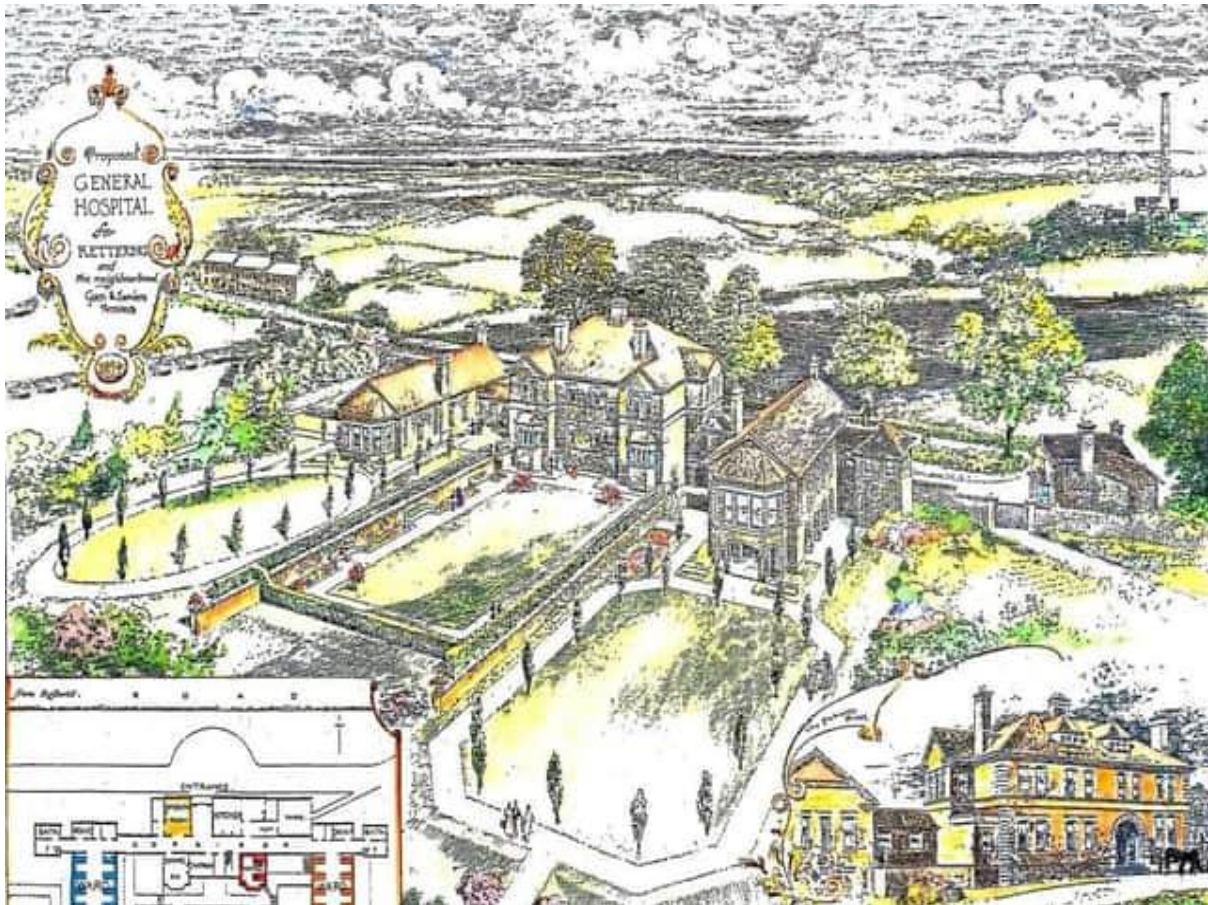
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When **Kettering** General Hospital first opened its doors in 1897 it had just 22 beds and an annual budget of just over £1,000.

Fast forward exactly 125 years and it is spending millions of pounds providing care for hundreds of thousands of patients each year – on the same Rothwell Road site.

They celebrated the special anniversary on Sunday (October 30), having been created when the people of the town decided they needed a general hospital at a meeting in 1891.



The artist's impression created by Gotch and Saunders when the hospital opened

Since then they've helped generations of people from **Northamptonshire** and beyond, providing care from the cradle to the grave.

Hospital chief executive Deborah Needham said: "Every year our amazing team of more than 4,000 staff and volunteers work together to support local people through illness and injury and also bring more than 3,700 new babies into the world.

"Over those 125 years our hospital has undergone an amazing transformation and is now almost unrecognisable from its humble beginnings.

"When we opened on October 30, 1897, we had only 22 beds – now we have more than 600. In 1897 we had about 10 nurses and a matron – we now have more than 1,000 nurses, midwives, healthcare assistants and other support roles."



How the wards used to look at KGH

Kettering MP Philip Hollobone (Con) congratulated the hospital on its anniversary.

He said: "Not many hospitals have been around that long on the same site and the town of Kettering is very fortunate. 1897 was clearly a remarkable year in the life of Kettering – not only did the town celebrate Her Majesty Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, but the Evening Telegraph was founded and Kettering General Hospital was established.

"Kettering was clearly a happening place then and it remains a happening place today."

How far medical science has come



The main block being built in the 1970s

KGH's cardiac centre is now routinely performing heart procedures which previously would have required open heart surgery at specialist centres.

The hospital takes part in national screening initiatives – such as the bowel and breast screening programmes – which save lives every year by enabling them to diagnose cancers earlier.

Orthopaedic teams carry out joint replacement operations which enable hundreds of older people to remain active for many more years than would previously have been possible.

Modern advances also mean medical, surgical and diagnostic teams can effectively treat many more conditions – and enable people to go home much more quickly, and to a better quality of life, than ever before.



The hospital now treats hundreds of thousands of patients.

The hospital's director of nursing, midwifery and allied health professionals, Fiona Barnes, said: "While many things have changed in healthcare there are some things that always stay the same. The hospital teams provide the individual care that our patients appreciate most when they are often feeling at their most vulnerable."

KGH history timeline

1880s – The case for a general hospital in Kettering is discussed.

1891 – At a town meeting the people of Kettering decide they need a general hospital, that funds should be raised and that a committee should take the matter in hand.

1894 – The hospital planning committee is under way with local architects Gotch and Saunders employed to produce plans and an artist's impression.

1895 – Fundraising, donations and subscriptions enable work to start in October of that year on the clinic buildings which front Rothwell Road.



How KGH could look under its latest rebuild plans

1897 – The Right Honourable CR Spencer formally opens the hospital with celebrations in the town. Its 22 beds are in separate wards for men and women and 120 operations are carried out over the first two years.

1920 – The first children's ward – with 20 cots – is created as the Frank Berrill Ward.

1948 – The NHS is created. By now KGH has 129 beds, two operating theatres and five nursing sisters.

1960s – A flurry of building works take place to address the growing local population. This includes a nine-storey nursing home, outpatient department and A&E.

1962 – KGH becomes the first district general hospital in England to open an intensive care unit under Dr Gerrard Crockett. It has four beds.

1970s – Work begins on a six-storey main ward block in 1971 and is completed in 1976. The Rockingham Wing opens in 1977.

1990s – The day case unit is built and a new A&E department comes in 1993.

2000 – The Centenary Wing opens to its first patients after a fundraising campaign supported by the Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph. In 2002 the hospital gets its first MRI scanner and in 2003 the £1m Jubilee Wing opens.

2007 - The £18m Treatment Centre opens in full to provide a state-of-the-art location for day surgery.

2008 – KGH becomes a foundation trust and establishes a representative council of governors. It also opens its £4.7m Cardiac Centre, treating more than 3,000 local people with heart problems in the first year.

2013 – The £30m Foundation Wing opens, housing a new children's ward, cardiac care wards and intensive care unit.

2016 – A £5m refurbishment of the maternity unit is completed.

2019 – Plans for a £46m Urgent Care Hub are approved by the Government and KGH is enrolled on the Health Infrastructure Plan (HIP2) to bid for a hospital rebuild.

2020 – The Covid-19 pandemic hits the world and KGH teams have to transform the way they work to meet to meet the challenge. In the same year a further £350m is pledged by the Government for a hospital rebuild.

2021 – KGH officially becomes part of the University Hospitals of Northamptonshire NHS Group with Northampton General Hospital.